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SOME time ago we quoted a passage from Mr. Freeman's "History of Architecture," but we have not yet given our readers any account of the contents and tenor of his book.* Let us now endeavour to do so. According to the author, the idea which he kept in his mind during its composition was, the Historical Study of the *Art* of Architecture; and his work is an attempt to trace, as simply and popularly as the subject will admit, this history in its developments among all nations, looking at once to the *artistic principles* of successive styles, and the manner in which they are carried out in their more prominent details. He has not sought, he says, to make it either archæological or ecclesiological, unless incidentally, but its aim is, "to trace, with as little reference as possible to extraneous matter, the historical sequence of styles as distinguished by their pervading principles, and the influence wrought upon them by those circumstances which mould the mind and manners of a nation. Attention will be rather given to the grand features of outline and composition than to the minutiæ of detail, unless when the latter really illustrate principles of art. Detail has been already sufficiently treated of in several works, all of which have their use, while no popular work, unless the thoughtful and truly original volumes of Mr. Petit can be ranked under that head, has yet paid much attention to the former."

The work consists of a general introduction and two books. The introduction has three chapters: 1. Design and scope of the work; 2. Causes of the diversity of styles in architecture; 3. Division of styles in architecture. The first part of Book I., treating of the earlier and ruder forms, has five chapters: 1. Pelasgian architecture; 2. Of early columnar architecture; 3. Of the ancient architecture of India; 4. Of Egyptian architecture, and, 5. Of the ancient architecture of Western Asia. In Part II., treating of Grecian architecture, we have—1. Of the origin of Grecian architecture (timber-construction, he thinks, and owing nothing to Egypt); 2. Of the three orders of columns (the Doric the most perfect, the Ionic the least); 3. Of temples, and other buildings of Grecian architecture; and, 4. General review of Grecian architecture, which he maintains is not adapted to modern uses. The Second Book is appropriated to the architecture of the arch. Part I. treats of the "Round Arch, or Roman Architecture," and is subdivided into —1. Of the classical or transitional Roman; 2. Origin of Romanesque architecture; 3. Of Basilican architecture; 4. Of other early Christian architecture in Italy; 5. Of Byzantine architecture; 6. Its influence; 7. Of the Romanesque of Italy, or Lombard style; 8. Of the Romanesque of Germany; 9. Of Romanesque of Ireland; 10. Of the Early Romanesque of England, or Anglo-Saxon style; 11. Of the Romanesque of Southern France; 12. Of the Romanesque of Northern France and England, or Norman style; 13. Of the influence of late architecture in the east; 14. General review of Romanesque architecture, which our author considers the perfection of round-arched construction; and, 15 and 16, of Arabian architecture.

The second part of Book II. relates to pointed arch or Gothic architecture, and contains—1. Definition and origin of Gothic architecture; 2. Of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic; 3. Of the subdivisions of Gothic; 4. Of the Early Gothic; 5. Of the late or Continuous Gothic; 6. Of the Gothic of Southern Europe; and 7. Of the decay of Gothic architecture, with which the work concludes. There are no engraved illustrations, with the exception of a very indifferent view, as frontispiece, of Yatton Church, Somerset, mentioned by us last week; and references to examples are few, the discussion of principles rather than the teaching of characteristics being the aim.

Our author considers that the ecclesiological and archæological study of architecture has not tended to evolve a knowledge of its principles. "It is not archæology in its right place, as something subordinate and ancillary," he says, "but archæology exclusive, assuming, claiming a rank which does not belong to it, which is at this present moment the bane, not only of architecture, but of a yet nobler study, of history itself, as relating to the times and people most deeply interesting to us." With the "narrow, insular exclusiveness" with which the ecclesiological movement set out he has no sympathy, and he abuses "the narrowness and prejudice which still exist in many quarters."

"Which style is the best," says he, "is surely a matter of taste; I have myself a very strong opinion that, on the whole, Perpendicular is the best, and I have given my reasons for that belief; but I have endeavoured to do justice to every form of the art, and I flatter myself that I cannot be fairly charged with running down any style. But I am often sorry to see writers for whom I have a high respect going out of their way to express their dislike of a particular form of art, and appearing hardly capable of mentioning any one Perpendicular building without dragging in some uncalled-for expression of depreciation."

Mr. Freeman's tolerance, however, scarcely extends beyond mediæval art, notwithstanding that he elsewhere further says—

"As the last generation despised all architecture except that of the Greeks and Romans, and was content to abide in ignorance of what it despised; there is now a tendency at work to make the ecclesiastical architecture of the middle ages the centre of an equally confined view. That Gothic architecture is beyond all comparison the noblest effort of the art, that it is the only style to be adopted for modern structures in western Europe, the present writer would never dream for a moment of calling in question; but this surely does not preclude us from looking on the architecture of other nations as being at least as curious and valuable a study as other researches of the like kind."

Anything more than "looking" at it, however, he is not disposed to permit. Hear, for example, how he speaks of Italian architecture, concerning the beauties of which so many accomplished architects discoursed eloquently last week; and the moral condemnation seriously pronounced on those iniquitous individuals, Michaelangelo and poor Christopher Wren. The "Confirmed Italian style," he maintains, "must be looked upon as simply *detestable*;"—it is, "both in a *moral* and an artistic view, *thoroughly contemptible*."

"And, above all, when we consider that this corrupted style was deliberately, by a formal purpose, in contempt of all ancient precedent and tradition, and in despite of every religious and national feeling, substituted for the most glorious forms that Christendom has ever beheld, it is impossible but that our admiration for the genius and skill of many of its authors must be altogether overbalanced by a feeling approaching to *disgust* at the utter perversion of their mighty powers. St. Peter's at Rome and St. Paul's in London might, a thousand years sooner, have commanded feelings of unmixed homage, and might have ranked side by side with St. Sophia and St. Mark's; but when we know that they were reared in contempt of Cologne, and Westminster, and St. Ouen's, our feelings of admiration at the vast conception of the whole, the wonderful mechanical skill displayed, the real majesty and beauty which cannot be denied them, are lost in the shock sustained by our best ideal of a Christian temple, and in the *moral condemnation* which a high view of Christian art must of necessity pronounce upon their authors."

What will Mr. Cockerell say to this? and what, to the very violent philippic against his own Taylor and Randolph Buildings, at Oxford, in which Mr. Freeman has indulged at the close of his volume?

Whatever merit may be due to our author, he certainly may not lay the flattering unction to his soul that he has not "*run down* any style."

And here we would take the opportunity to remark, that we cannot agree with Mr. Sydney Smirke in his opinion, mentioned last week, that the style of Italy is in truth that of the Greeks; that Italian architecture, being only a species of a genus, should not be put forward as a distinct style. To give up this distinction would be, as it seems to us, to retrograde in architectural science: the detection and classification of minuter differences is the course of progress. Moreover, the general use of the arch, and the force of the requirements of the time, rendered the architecture of Italy so different from that of Greece, that it is not a minute but an obvious and important variety which requires to be distinguished as the Italian style. Every succeeding form of the art may be traced up to the Greek model; but this is not a sufficient reason for gulphing them all under one title.

Mr. Freeman pays just tribute to the beauty of Greek architecture, in Greece. The introduction to this portion of his subject is one of the most eloquently written portions of the book. "Greece is fallen, but her possessions have become the inheritance of the world throughout all time. And this is especially true of her admirable architecture. As it was in Greece that the art first obtained perfection, it was in Greece, too, that it first acquired a character worthy to be transmitted to other lands."

The "classical Roman style" our author thinks as contemptible as the revived Italian: —"It is a mere transition—an inconsistent jumble of contrary principles."

In the Romanesque of various countries, which grew up on its ruins, he finds his first and exceeding great consolation. After examining the Romanesque works, he says:—

"At this point, having traced ecclesiastical architecture to its first stage of perfection, the

* "A History of Architecture." By Edward A. Freeman, M.A., late Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. London: Masters. 1849.

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